

# EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

## PUBLIC AFFAIRS SECTION

TEL: 880-2-883-7150-4

FAX: 880-2-9881677, 9885688

E-MAIL: [DhakaPA@state.gov](mailto:DhakaPA@state.gov)

WEBSITE: <http://dhaka.usembassy.gov>



## REMARKS BY AMBASSADOR JAMES F. MORIARTY AT THE INDEPENDENCE DAY RECEPTION

**DHAKA, MAY 29 --** U.S. Ambassador James F. Moriarty made the following remarks at a reception on the occasion of the U.S. Independence Day at the U.S. Embassy in Dhaka on Wednesday, May 28:

(Begin Text)

Dr. Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury, General Ghulam Quader, Members of the Diplomatic Corps, distinguished guests, friends and colleagues – As Salaam-u-Aleikum, and good evening.

The United States of America celebrates its birthday on July 4<sup>th</sup>. On that day in 1776, Americans meeting in the Continental Congress in Philadelphia declared the reasons why they had announced their country's independence from Great Britain. They enshrined in the Declaration of Independence the principle that governments “deriv[e] their just powers from the consent of the governed.” They gave birth to a new country, the United States of America.

Today we celebrate the 232<sup>nd</sup> birthday of the United States of America.

Today we celebrate democracy.

You may have noticed that we are celebrating this birthday of the United States early. Today is May 28, not July 4. But it democracy, not a date, that we are celebrating. And it is fitting that we celebrate democracy.

This year is a transformational year for democracy in the United States and in Bangladesh. Before yearend, both the United States and Bangladesh will hold elections to choose new leaders. Our governments will seek the consent of the governed to make a path toward the future.

Making that path has never been easy for any democracy. The Articles of Confederation that governed the United States in the early years following the Declaration of Independence proved inadequate to promote democracy in America. In 1787, after years of difficult negotiation and painful compromise, the United States adopted a Constitution designed “to form a more perfect Union.” No one who signed the Constitution, no state that ratified the

Constitution got everything it wanted. But the people of the United States got a Constitution that strengthened democracy in America.

Later the United States fought a bloody and bitter Civil War to decide whether those most oppressed in our country, the slaves, would benefit from our democratic form of government. As the Civil War drew toward a close, President Abraham Lincoln, in his Second Inaugural Address, recognized that the prayers of both sides—those who supported slavery and those who opposed it—could not be answered at the same time and that the prayers of neither side had been answered fully.

Democracy in the United States—democracy anywhere—is always a work in progress.

Bangladesh is no exception to the maxim that democracy is a work in progress.

Bangladesh has a history of democratic governance. The next six months will determine whether Bangladesh will face the future with a democratic government committed to the goals outlined in the preamble to its Constitution. Namely, a society in which the rule of law, fundamental human rights and freedom, equality and justice; political, economic and social rights, will be secured for all citizens.

In recent months, Bangladesh has made progress toward reestablishing democracy. The massive voter registration drive, now almost complete, testifies to that progress. The opening of negotiations between the Caretaker Government and political parties testifies to that progress. The lively debate in the media over the way forward testifies to that progress.

In the coming months, the task of building democracy in Bangladesh will take hard work and compromise. It will be hard in Bangladesh as it is in any country for political parties to put aside partisan politics and think of the people. Bangladesh's veteran political leaders can secure their place in history by doing exactly that.

To agree on when and how to lift the state of emergency will take hard work and compromise. Only if the state of emergency is lifted before the start of political campaigning will anyone believe that election results reflect the will of the Bangladeshi people.

The United States stands with the people of Bangladesh as they struggle to build a strong democracy. We will help if wanted and where we can. But Bangladesh will decide its own future. Bangladeshis must do the hard work and make the compromises needed to advance democracy.

With constructive participation in the process by all Bangladeshi political parties and all voters, with hard work and compromise, Bangladesh can create a brighter democratic future.

In the United States, too, the future of democracy is bright. Americans have turned out in record numbers to vote in this year's primary elections. People of every age, race, color and creed from all around the country are participating actively in the political process.

Tonight we celebrate democracy. Tonight we celebrate the birthday of the United States. God bless America.

Thank you for coming. Enjoy the party.

=====

*\* As prepared for delivery*

**GR/2008**

*Note: A Bangla translation of this speech is also available at the American Center. If you are interested in the translation, please call the American Center Press Section, Tel: 8837150-4, Fax: 9885688; e-mail: [DhakaPA@state.gov](mailto:DhakaPA@state.gov); Website: [http:// dhaka.usembassy.gov](http://dhaka.usembassy.gov)*